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Titus Hejlm, Keith Kahn-Harris & Mark Levine (eds.), "Heavy metal : controversies and counter culture", *Popular Music History*, vol. 6, 2011.

Edited volumes are important in the development of academic sub-disciplines. They are also valuable in the classroom because they offer students access to short pieces written by different authors with different foci, methodologies, and writing styles. The special issue of the journal *Popular Music History* titled "Heavy Metal: Controversies and Countercultures", will serve as a strong addition to the recent number of important edited volumes that contribute to the developing field of metal studies (the academic study of heavy metal music). There are also plans to release this issue as an edited volume, which will doubtless bring these important essays to more readers and scholars.

Editors Titus Hjelm, Keith Kahn-Harris and Mark LeVine have divided the volume's 13 articles into two sections, "Controversies" and "Countercultures." The Introduction does a good job of questioning and theorizing both of these ideas. "Controversy" needs little explanation in the context of heavy metal, a music whose image has disturbed (sometimes intentionally, sometimes not) established authorities since its inception. Metal is acknowledged as transgressive by fans and critics alike. Metal's transgressions may be religious (the supposed Satanism associated with heavy metal in the 1980s in the US and more recently in the Middle East and North Africa, the actual neo-paganism that informs much metal), politics (Black Sabbath's criticism of "Generals gathered in their masses/ just like witches at black masses", or Orphaned Land's Jewish, Christian and Muslim band mates who sing together about peace), and psychological (metal celebrates individuality and choosing one's own path, as represented in Deena Weinstein's famous description of metal fans as "proud pariahs"). These transgressions bring us to the "Countercultures," and here the editors (correctly, I believe) feel the need to justify their word choice. Some scholars have criticized the word "counterculture" for being too broad and too pointedly oriented against the mainstream, so others studying music and its fans use terms like "scene" and "subculture." However, in the context of heavy metal, "counterculture" is the right term for precisely those reasons that led previous scholars to reject it. Heavy metal is, for many of its fans, more than just a music, as indicated by Rosemary Overell's discussion (in her article in this volume) of "being brutal" ("brutal" is a positive word among grindcore fans); fans want more than just music they like, they want certain spaces, types of sociality, visual cues, and, as Overell says, "affect." Also, heavy metal is transgressive; the culture built around metal is specifically "counter" to the mainstream. For metal studies in general, and this volume in particular, "counterculture" seems to be the correct term.

The first half of the volume, focused on Controversies, includes several articles that describe moral panic as a general theory and specific panics in different times and places. Andy Brown's excellent article looks at why there was a moral panic about heavy metal music in the 1980s in the U.S. but not about Emo music in the 1990s in England. Brad Klypchak's article looks at how various artists who were considered dangerous in the 1980s have been nostalgically reinvented. The article by Gérôme Guibert and Jedediah Sklower looks at the 2008 controversy about Hellfest, a festival of heavy metal music held in western France, in which a Catholic priest and his followers criticized the festival

and its music. Luckily the locals, convinced that fans were not mere unthinking consumers, unquestioningly accepting whatever they heard, supported the festival. The volume's Introduction, written by Hjelm, Kahn-Harris and LeVine, adds to its international depth by describing recent moral panics in the Muslim Middle East and North Africa.

In her article, Hélène Laurin reminds metal fans and scholars that the reception of metal was not universally negative, even among rock critics. Marcus Moberg's article considers Christian metal's double controversy: metal fans often judge it as neither authentic nor dangerous enough to be good metal and Christians often judge it as neither religious nor proper enough to be good religious practice. This section also includes the article Dworkin's Nightmare: Porngrind as the Sound of Feminist Fears by Lee Barron, to my mind the most disturbing article in the volume, and I don't think this is simply because of its salacious and disturbing subject matter. Barron considers porngrind (a genre of heavy metal music characterized by violent sexualized representations of women) in light of Andrea Dworkin's well-known (and oft-criticized) analysis of pornography as a celebration of female subservience and victimization. I am troubled by Barron's (admittedly engaging) light tone when dealing with such an ugly topic and wonder whether he is sufficiently critical of the danger of blatantly violent misogynistic language and imagery.

The "Counterculture" half of the volume opens with Jeremy Wallach's and Alexandra Levine's article, which provides a model of metal scene formation. Based on fieldwork conducted in Toledo, Ohio (by Levine), and Jakarta, Indonesia (by Wallach), they outline four important functions of metal scenes and six generalizations about them. (I should acknowledge that Jeremy Wallach is my husband and colleague.) In the next article, one of the strongest in the volume, Benjamin Olson discusses National Socialist (Nazi) Black Metal (hereafter NSBM), ultimately arguing that NSBM will grow increasingly more marginal because black metal celebrates a pre-modern world and is unwilling to limit its misanthropy according to race. It is therefore incompatible with National Socialism, which is both modern and associated with a specific group in opposition to others. Michelle Philipov's article offers a thoughtful consideration of the connection between heavy metal music and violence, which she argues is simultaneously embraced and rejected by certain bands (she looks specifically at the black metal group Emperor). Nicola Allett's article, which analyzes her interviewees' discussions of their participation in the extreme metal scene in the UK, follows. As it becomes more difficult for the scene to increase its extremity, scene members become more elitist and exclusionary about their musical tastes, which she ultimately sees as a rejection of certain understandings of modernity.

Kevin Fellezs' article describes the history of Stone Vengeance, an African-American thrash metal band, and the challenges they have faced in the scene, which he argues are tied to their race. This article is one of the most moving in the volume because the reader is left with a profound sense of the scene's racism and a deep appreciation for the band's perseverance in spite of their challenges with audiences and record producers. There is something very "metal" about the band's decades' long commitment to the music and scene in spite of these challenges. This article is a strong addition to the volume in that it looks at specific individuals and their music, a subject of growing interest in academia in general and ethnomusicology in particular.

The final article in the collection, by Niall Scott, questions heavy metal's supposed "apolitical" stance. Ultimately he argues that, in many cases, "apolitical"

means not connected to specific parties or governmental policies, not unconcerned with power in the world. This is an important realization – in the last five or so years, I have noticed that undergraduates (and occasionally even graduate students) are growing more resistant to discussing "politics" or "the political." But this apparently apolitical stance often peacefully coexists with a deep concern for the lives of others and strong sense of justice. The significance of Niall's excellent argument reaches well beyond metal studies and is important to anyone thinking about young people and their relationships to ideas of power, justice, and "the political."

Heavy Metal: Controversies and Countercultures is an excellent volume – well-written, thought-provoking, and covering diverse subjects. There are, however, a few topics whose absence from the volume is unfortunate. I realize that no volume can address all relevant topics and that it is, in some ways, unfair to criticize a book for what it is not or does not include. But I still wish that this volume had more detailed discussions of heavy metal music in places outside of the United States, Australia, and Western Europe (although the scenes in the Middle East and North Africa are discussed in the Introduction, the Indonesian scene is discussed in one article, and NSBM in Eastern Europe is discussed in another). There is also a lack of musical analysis –when the sound of metal music is described (which itself doesn't happen often enough), general descriptors are used. Obviously many members of the volume's audience (myself included, frankly) would have trouble understanding detailed musicological analysis, so in some ways this omission is understandable. Nevertheless, I think at least some detailed analysis of the music would be appropriate in a book that is about a musical genre and its critics and fans. Ironically, Keith Kahn-Harris (2011, p. 252) has written that "…the relative paucity of detailed musicological analyses on metal" is "undoubtedly the most critical weakness in metal studies…." (252). He is right.

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